

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of conducting an electronic purchasing process ~~importing supplier information for use by a purchasing computing system~~, the method comprising:
 - initiating an electronic purchasing process on a purchasing computing system having an internal contact directory hosted by a service provider of the purchasing computing system;
 - establishing communication, by the [[a]] purchasing computing system, with an external service provider that includes a contact directory of suppliers and information relating to the suppliers, the external contact directory hosted by an external service provider that is not the service provider of the purchasing computing system;
 - sending a request from the purchasing computing system and to the external contact directory service provider, the request identifying a user-selected one of the suppliers included in the external contact directory;
 - receiving, in a format compliant with a partner interface protocol, a response from the external directory service provider and at the purchasing computing system, the response including information relating to the selected supplier;
 - parsing the information in the received response; [[and]]

creating, using the information parsed from the response, a new business partner entry in the internal directory, the new business partner entry for the selected supplier ~~in a directory that is usable by the purchasing computing system; and~~
assigning the selected supplier as a source of supply in the in the purchasing process.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 [[2]], wherein said creating of the new business partner entry comprises mapping the parsed information into fields according to the partner interface protocol.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 [[2]], wherein the response comprises an HTML page.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 [[2]], wherein the response comprises an XML page.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein further comprising:
~~prior to said establishing communication with the server, initiating a business the~~
electronic purchasing process [[which]] requires a business partner.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, further comprising:
completing the electronic purchasing process ~~business process~~ with the new business partner entry.
8. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising generating a purchase order using the new business partner entry.
9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether a [[the]] user who initiated and is controlling the electronic purchasing process has authority to approve the new business partner entry.
10. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising:
flagging the new business partner entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.
11. (Original) The method of claim 10, further comprising:
generating a purchasing document with said new business partner entry; and
flagging the purchasing document as on hold.
12. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising:
determining an authorized approver for the new business partner entry.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising:
generating an approval workflow item for the authorized approver.
14. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising:
deleting the new business partner entry from the internal directory in response to the
authorized approver not approving the new business partner entry.
15. (Currently Amended) An article comprising a machine-readable medium storing
instructions operable to cause one or more machines to perform operations of conducting an
electronic purchasing process importing supplier information for use by a purchasing computing
system, the operations comprising:
initiating an electronic purchasing process on a purchasing computing system having an
internal contact directory hosted by a service provider of the purchasing computing system;
establishing communication, by the ~~[[a]]~~ purchasing computing system, with an external
~~service provider that includes a~~ contact directory of suppliers and information relating to the
suppliers, the external contact directory hosted by an external service provider that is not the
service provider of the purchasing computing system;
sending a request from the purchasing computing system and to the external contact
directory ~~service provider~~, the request identifying a user-selected one of the suppliers included in
the external contact directory;

receiving, in a format compliant with a partner interface protocol, a response from the external directory service provider and at the purchasing computing system, the response including information relating to the selected supplier;

parsing the information in the received response; [[and]]

creating, using the information parsed from the response, a new business partner entry in the internal directory, the new business partner entry for the selected supplier ~~in a directory that is usable by the purchasing computing system; and~~

assigning the selected supplier as a source of supply in the in the purchasing process.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 15 [[16]], wherein said creating of the new business partner entry comprises mapping the parsed information into fields according to the partner interface protocol.

18. (Currently Amended) The article of claim of claim 15 [[16]], wherein the response comprises an HTML page.

19. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 15 [[16]], wherein the response comprises an XML page.

20. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 15, wherein further comprising
~~instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:~~
~~prior to said establishing communication with the server, initiating a business~~ the
electronic purchasing process [[which]] requires a business partner.

21. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 20, further comprising instructions
operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:
completing the electronic purchasing process ~~business process~~ with the new business
partner entry.

22. (Original) The article of claim of claim 21, further comprising instructions
operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising generating a
purchase order using the new business partner entry.

23. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 15, further comprising instructions
operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:
determining whether a [[the]] user who initiated and is controlling the electronic
purchasing process has authority to approve the new business partner entry.

24. (Original) The article of claim 23, further comprising instructions operable to
cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

flagging the new business partner entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.

25. (Original) The article of claim 24, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

generating a purchasing document with said new business partner entry; and
flagging the purchasing document as on hold.

26. (Original) The article of claim 23, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

determining an authorized approver for the new business partner entry.

27. (Original) The article of claim 26, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

generating an approval workflow item for the authorized approver.

28. (Original) The article of claim 26, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

deleting the new business partner entry from the internal directory in response to the authorized approver not approving the new business partner entry.

29. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

an internal contact directory including information relating to a plurality of business partners;

a network device; and

an electronic procurement system hosted by a service provider that also hosts the internal contact directory, the electronic procurement system operative to:

- initiate an electronic purchasing process on the electronic procurement system;
- establish communication with an external ~~service provider that includes a~~ contact directory of suppliers and information relating to the suppliers, the external contact directory hosted by an external service provider that is not the service provider of the electronic procurement system;
- send a request to the external contact directory ~~service provider~~, the request identifying a user-selected one of the suppliers included in the external contact directory;
- receive, in a format compliant with a partner interface protocol, a response from the external directory ~~service provider~~, the response including information relating to the selected supplier;
- parse the information in the received response; [[and]]
- create, using the information parsed from the response, a new business partner entry in the internal directory, the new business partner entry for the selected supplier ~~in the internal directory;~~ and
- assign the selected supplier as a source of supply in the in the purchasing process.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 29 [[30]], wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to map the parsed information into fields according to the partner interface protocol.

32. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 29 [[30]], wherein the response comprises an HTML page.

33. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 29 [[30]], wherein the response comprises an XML page.

34. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 29, wherein ~~the electronic procurement system is further operative to:~~
~~prior to said establishing communication with the server, initiate a business~~ the electronic purchasing process [[which]] requires a business partner.

35. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 34, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:
complete the electronic purchasing business process with the new business partner entry.

36. (Original) The system of claim 35, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

generate a purchase order using the new business partner entry.

37. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 29, further comprising:
determine whether a [[the]] user who initiated and is controlling the electronic purchasing process has authority to approve the new business partner entry.

38. (Original) The system of claim 37, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

flag the new business partner entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.

39. (Original) The system of claim 38, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

generate a purchasing document with said new business partner entry; and
flag the purchasing document as on hold.

40. (Original) The system of claim 34, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

determine an authorized approver for the new business partner entry.

41. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

generate an approval workflow item for the authorized approver.

42. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

delete the new business partner entry from the internal directory in response to the authorized approver not approving the new business partner entry.